

States Congress to act to get an immigration plan that is comprehensive and rational and achieves important objectives.

So I want to welcome you all for being here. I want to thank you very much for your involvement in this vital issue. I've assured folks here at the table that I will continue to speak out on the issue. I feel passionately about the need for our country to conduct themselves with dignity and, at the same time, enforce our border and treat people here with respect.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:37 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

**Remarks on Signing a Bill To
Authorize the Extension of
Nondiscriminatory Treatment to the
Products of Ukraine**

March 23, 2006

Thank you. Pleased be seated. Ambassador, good to see you. Please be seated. Welcome. Appreciate you all coming. In a few minutes, I'm going to sign a bill that authorizes permanent normal trade relations between the United States and Ukraine. It's a good bill, and it's going to strengthen our ties with our friend Ukraine. It's going to create new opportunities, economic opportunities, for both our countries.

I really want to thank the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a man who knows what he's talking about when it comes to the world, and that's Chairman Lugar from Indiana. Thank you for coming, sir. I thank the bill sponsor, Congressman Jim Gerlach, and his wife, Karen, is here today. Thank you for coming, Mr. Congressman. Congressman Tom Lantos is with us. He's the Ranking Member of the House International Relations Committee. Congressman Curt Weldon, a cosponsor of the bill, is with us. Congresswoman Candice Miller from Michigan, a cosponsor, is with us, as well as a cosponsor, Congressman Mike Fitzpatrick. Thank you all for being here.

I welcome you all here. I especially welcome the Ambassador from Ukraine, Amba-

sador Shamshur. Welcome, Mr. Ambassador. Appreciate you coming. This is the third time we've been together in the last 30 days. [Laughter] I'm better for it. [Laughter]

The bill I sign today marks the beginning of a new era in our history with Ukraine. During the cold war, Congress passed the Jackson-Vanik Amendment as a response to widespread communist deprivation of human rights. The law made American trade with communist nations contingent on those countries' respect for the rights of their own people. At the time, the law served an important purpose; it helped to encourage freedom and the protection of fundamental rights and penalized nations that denied liberty to their citizens. Times have changed. The cold war is over, and a free Ukraine is a friend to America and an inspiration to those who love liberty.

The Orange Revolution was a powerful example of democracy for people around the world. The brave citizens who gathered in Kiev's Independence Square demanded the chance to determine their nation's future, and when they got that chance, they chose freedom. In the past 2 years, Ukraine has held free elections, and the people of Ukraine and its President, Viktor Yushchenko, are deeply committed to democratic reform. On Sunday, the Ukrainian people will again have the chance to cast a ballot in parliamentary elections, and they have a chance to continue to shape their own future.

Ukraine is also working to expand its market economy and produce measurable improvements in the lives of the Ukrainian people. America supports these efforts, and this bill is an important step. By eliminating barriers to trade between the United States and Ukraine, the bill will help Ukraine grow in prosperity. As we've seen over the past 50 years, trade has the power to create new wealth for whole nations and new opportunities for people around the world. By expanding trade with Ukraine, this bill will open new markets for American products and help Ukrainians continue to build a free economy that will raise the standard of living for families across their land.

As Ukraine embraces democracy and more open trade, our nations' friendship will grow. President Yushchenko has made reforms to

increase transparency and provide intellectual property protection and strengthen the enforcement of the rule of law.

These reforms have taken great conviction. And earlier this month, our two nations signed a bilateral agreement that will establish the terms of trade between our nations when Ukraine join the World Trade Organization. We support Ukraine's goal of joining the WTO, and we will help resolve the remaining steps required for entry as quickly as possible. As the Ukrainian Government continues to build on a record of progress at home, we will help Ukraine join the institutions that unite free nations and become a part of Europe that is whole, free, and at peace.

The growth of economic freedom and ownership in countries like the Ukraine reinforces the habits of liberty and democracy and gives citizens a stake in the success of their nation. Ukrainian people have shown the world they are committed to the ideals of economic freedom and democratic progress and open trade, and that gives them a promising future.

The United States is proud to call Ukraine a friend, and I'm honored to sign this important piece of legislation into law.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:01 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Ukraine's Ambassador to the U.S. Oleh Shamshur. H.R. 1053, approved March 23, was assigned Public Law No. 109-205.

Proclamation 7990—Small Business Week, 2006

March 23, 2006

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

The entrepreneurial spirit of America is robust and strong, and small businesses are thriving throughout our great Nation. The opportunity to own a business is an important part of the American dream. During Small Business Week, we celebrate small business owners and employees who are willing to

take risks and work hard in pursuit of a better life for themselves and their families.

Our economy has created almost 5 million jobs since August 2003. Small businesses create most new jobs in our country, and small businesses have been a driving force behind America's tremendous economic growth and job creation. By adopting sound economic policies that help small businesses continue to grow and expand, we will keep our economy moving forward and create more jobs for American workers.

My Administration remains committed to fostering an environment where innovation succeeds and small businesses can flourish. We are working with the Congress to make the tax relief permanent and to pass Association Health Plans to allow small businesses to join together and buy insurance at the same discounts big businesses receive. We are encouraging small business owners and employees to consider health savings accounts, which help small businesses provide health insurance for their workers and give consumers greater flexibility in how they spend their dollars. We also are continuing to work to open new markets for American products and services abroad. Putting a stop to the frivolous lawsuits that drive up the cost of doing business will further help small businesses enhance the quality of life for their employees and their communities.

During Small Business Week, and throughout the year, we applaud the men and women who own and operate small businesses and spur economic growth. Through their entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to excellence, they help ensure that America remains a place where dreams are realized.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 9 through April 15, 2006, as Small Business Week. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs that celebrate the achievements of small business owners and their employees and encourage the development of new small businesses.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-third day of March, in